NSW public school educators in WWI & WWII

For the first time, it is now possible to digitally access a carefully researched record of the biographical details of NSW public school teachers and education department officers who enlisted to serve their country in World War I and World War II.

The three-part ***New South Wales Department of Education Record of Service in Two World Wars*** was written by T A White, an esteemed NSW public school educator who served with honour in the AIF in World War I.

This unique work also provides an equally carefully researched account of contributions to the war effort during both world wars made by public school teachers, students, principals, public school officers, schools and their wider communities.

Thomas Alexander White

Thomas Alexander White (1886- 1962) was a distinguished NSW public school teacher, principal, inspector, author and historian. He was also a distinguished soldier who enlisted in the AIF in February 1916 (he originally applied in 1914) and served on the Western Front on a number of famous Australian World War I battlefields.

The famous battles in which he fought included those at Mametz, Ypres, Polygon Wood, and Villers-Bretonneux. While fighting at Passchendaele in October 1917 he and about a quarter of his battalion were seriously injured in a mustard gas attack – the effects of which Tom suffered for the rest of his life. On October 19, 1918 while serving in the village of Picquigny, Tom was mentioned in despatches for gallantry for attempting to save a soldier in a canal.

Following his retirement from the Department of Education in 1950, Mr White undertook his *New South Wales Department of Education Record of Service in Two World Wars*. He commenced his remarkable task in 1951 and completed it in 1958. He died in 1962, still deeply disappointed that his work had never been published.

A meticulously researched work

In Parts I and II he included meticulously researched biographical details about the NSW public school teachers and departmental officers who had enlisted in both world wars. Tom White undertook this seven-year task because he had a burning desire that every NSW public school teacher, student and departmental official should learn about those public school teachers and officers who had enlisted to serve their country. As he wrote by hand very early in Part I, “Their children and their children’s children will be proud of them. They have the right to know of them.”

Both Parts I and II, and especially Part III, also include a wealth of information concerning the contribution to the War effort made by public schools, the Department of Education (as it was then called), school communities, students and other individuals and organisations associated with or supporters of NSW public education.

The Introduction that follows written by Dr Paul Brock AM, the Department’s Director of Learning and Development Research, provides some biographical details about Tom White’s career, the scope of his extraordinary manuscript and the background to the processes which led finally to its digital publication.

Note: the PDFs can be searched. Press CTRL-F (PC) or Command (⌘)-F (Mac).

Retaining the authenticity and historical integrity of T A White’s manuscript

The NSW Department of Education & Communities has chosen to replicate the three volumes in exactly their original condition, wherever possible, to retain the authenticity and historical integrity of the works; including any original duplications, defects, blemishes or corrections.

Disclaimers

The Department of Education and Communities has not verified the accuracy of the information or detail contained in these works. The works are a replication of T.A White's original works (plus the Preface, written by Dr J H Dugdale, to the 1996 publication of a handful of sets of the three volumes). Any views expressed or any errors or omissions in these works are the author's and are not necessarily those of the Department, nor necessarily intended to represent those of the Department.

The works are about war and may contain some content and depictions that may be upsetting or cause offence to some persons. They have been maintained to retain the historical integrity of the works and to understand the context in which the works were produced.

Acknowledgements

The NSW Department of Education & Communities (DEC) would like to acknowledge the following persons for their invaluable assistance in this project: Dr Max White (grandson); Dr Paul Brock AM (DEC) his Executive Assistant, Ms Georgie Lochhead and Personal Assistant / Carer Ms Xiaodi Liu; Mr Graeme Hosken (DEC); and Ms Monique Azzopardi (Hicksons).

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Any enquiries or communications in relation to the works should be directed to the Chief Legal Officer, Legal Services Directorate, the Department of Education & Communities: 35 Bridge Street, Sydney 2000.

An Introduction to T A White's three Part *New South Wales Department of Education Record of Service in Two World Wars*, which is provided in digitised form in the three other PDF files on this website

Thomas Alexander White (1886 – 1962) was a distinguished NSW public school teacher, Principal, Inspector, author and historian. He was also a distinguished soldier who enlisted in the AIF in 1916 (he originally applied in 1914) and served on the Western Front on a number of famous Australian World War I battlefields.

Tom White's life, including his educational and military careers, is detailed within the splendid biography *Thomas Alexander White 1886 – 1962: Teacher, Inspector of Schools & Military Historian* unpublished manuscript written by Dr Max White, T A White's grandson. The brief description of his military and education career provided later in this Introduction is based on Dr White's manuscript and my discussions with him. All photographs in this Introduction were provided by Dr White. Several of them were also taken by Dr White (those latter ones are specifically identified in the text).

On his return to Australia after the war, and following a period of convalescence and rehabilitation in both England and Sydney, Tom was sufficiently recovered to resume his career with the Education Department with an appointment as an Assistant Inspector of Schools at Paddington – to which he was appointed on August 23, 1919. He became the Principal of Gresford Public School in 1920.

Having commenced his teaching career as a probationary pupil teacher at the Deniliquin Superior School in 1902, Tom White retired from the NSW public education service in 1950 at the age of 64. Tom died on October 27, 1962, one week short of his 76th birthday.

Tom White's mighty undertaking

By the time he *commenced* his *New South Wales Department of Education Record of Service in Two World Wars* in 1951, Tom White was already a published author. He had written *Diggers Abroad*, *Duckboard Memories* and a children's book *Yappy Dingo, an Australian Fairy Tale*. He also was the author of *The Fighting Thirteenth*, the official history of the 13th Battalion (his own Battalion) in World War I. As Dr Max White's biography points out, Tom had also had a number of stories and articles published in *The Bulletin*, *Smith's Weekly* and *Aussie* and from November 1936 to March 1938 a series of 15 of his stories under the heading "The Little Dovetailed Box – A Soldier's Letters" were published in *Reveille*, the NSW RSL Journal.

With this experience of published authorship behind him, in 1951 Tom White commenced the herculean task of compiling a record of public school teachers and departmental officers who had served in World War I and World War II and schools. It was completed in 1958, four years before his death. Tom personally typed the manuscript. It would appear that he used five carbon papers to make copies as he typed the original. Some pages and some editorial changes are in his own handwriting.

Early on in Part I Tom White provided a list of chapters in which he outlined the extraordinary scope of his triple volumed work. In Part I he included biographical details about the NSW public school teachers and departmental officers who had enlisted in World War I. In Part I these details are addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. In Part II he included biographical details about the NSW public school teachers and departmental officers who had enlisted in World War II. These details are addressed in Chapters 13 and 14 - the words "Chapter 14" are obscured in the original, but it commences on a page titled "Roll of Honour, "The Supreme Sacrifice" (also very hard to read), "Second World War". An amount of material that appears in Part III also appears in Parts I and II.

Both Parts I and II include a wealth of information concerning the contribution to the War effort made by public schools, the Department of Education (as it was then called), school communities, students and other individuals and organisations associated with or supporters of NSW public education.

The following is the list of chapters he provided at the commencement of Part I of the manuscript – clearly it outlined the contents of both Part I and Part II. With only the tiniest editorial changes, the same list appears early on in Part III in which Tom included commentary about some of the initiatives and a range of activities within public schools and their communities, as well as some references to life in NSW during those two periods of World Wars.

1. The First World War
2. The Department Old and New
3. The Supreme Sacrifice
4. Awards
5. Those Who Served. Photos.
6. Inspiration
7. Patriotic Efforts. 7A. Photos, Patriotic efforts.
8. Weaving and Knitting
9. Parcels.
10. Children's Vegetable Production.
11. Items of interest. First World War.
12. Second World War; Safety of Children.
13. Those Who Served.
14. The Supreme Sacrifice.
15. Awards.
16. Speedy Responses.
17. Public Schools War Service Auxiliary. Photos.
18. The Wawili Association.
19. A Typical Final Report.
20. Head office War Workers Association.
21. Senior Cadet Information.
22. Correspondence School Chapter.
23. Final appeal by pupils of our schools.
24. France, Iceland, Italy, New Guinea.
25. Items.
26. Stirring Stories of Teachers and Officers.
27. Envoi.

In Part II, prior to listing in alphabetical order those teachers and departmental officers who enlisted in World War II, Tom White wrote the following.

> Twenty-five Teachers in the Armoured Division requested the writer to omit from this history the record of their services. The reason given generally was: "We did not go Overseas". Several other Teachers of this division refused to tell anything about their service.
>
> Keen disappointment still remains with many.
>
> Two Teachers who served with distinction in the R.A.A.F. asked that their records be omitted from this History.
> Their request has been granted.

Very early on in Part III Tom White wrote the following in his own handwriting, signing it "Thomas A White".

> From this volume the rolls of Teachers who served overseas, and particulars of their service, are omitted.
>
> They are in the other six double volumes.

Incidentally, it is from this last sentence that we can deduce that Tom used five carbon copy pages behind the page on which he was typing his manuscript to produce six sets of each of the two Parts ("double volumes"). It is not known at this time (2014) where the other five carbon copied sets are.

From correspondence of the time, Dr Max White believes that four of the other five copies were distributed as sets to the then Armidale Teachers College, the then Sydney Teachers College, the NSW State Library, and the Australian War Memorial. He suggests that the sixth was sent to the NSW Department of Education (in addition to the original manuscript sent to the Department).

To indicate that his work was highly thought of by his superiors, Tom cut and pasted (literally!) a short tribute to him and his work in the form of a Foreword written by the then Minister for Education, R J Heffron, and an additional Foreword written by the then Director-General of Education, Harold (later Sir Harold) Wyndham.

Tom undertook this task over seven years! Why? Because he had a burning desire that every NSW public school teacher, student and departmental officers should learn about those public school teachers and departmental officers who had enlisted to serve their country.
As he wrote by hand very early in Part I, "Their children and their children's children will be proud of them. They have the right to know of them."

Early on in each of the three Parts, Tom White wrote the following.

> There are countless places, as holy as great cathedrals, far from their homeland, where lie Australia's heroes.
>
> The gates of memory are never locked; they swing open to over re-current thoughts of loved ones and heroic deeds.
>
> Every peep through them is an inspiration.

Tom's burning desire was never fulfilled in his lifetime. Since 1958 the gates of his memory remained almost unlocked, never fully opened to enable all of us to "peep through them" to be inspired by his research, his writing expertise as an already published author, and his commitment to the memory of his colleagues in the NSW public teaching profession who had enlisted in the service of their country in World War I and World War II.

On August 11, 2014 – 56 years after he completed his three Part manuscript – Tom's desire was finally fulfilled with his remarkable work now being available to all via the internet.

The 1996 publication of three sets

In 1996 the then Director-General, Dr Ken Boston agreed to have all three Parts filmed, printed from the film, and bound in three sets. This was thanks largely to the efforts of Graeme Hosken, who then taught, and still teaches, at the Department's Dubbo School of Distance Education, and our then Departmental colleague, Rob Asser. The then President of the Teachers' RSL Sub-Branch of RSL Australia (NSW Branch) - referred to later in this Introduction as the Teachers' RSL Sub-Branch (NSW) – the late Dr J H Dugdale, wrote a fine Preface to the 1996 publication.

Before digitising these three volumes in 2013, the decision was taken to copy exactly every page – without any editing or amending the text, but including the added Preface to the 1996 publication. In so doing we repeated the same decision taken by those who produced the 1996 hard bound copies.

The 'history' from the identification of the three volume manuscript in 1995 and its eventual digitisation in 2013 and uploading onto the internet on the 11th August, 2014, warrants being recorded. In 1995, while undertaking research for her Master's degree Eloise Dews, then on the staff of the Dubbo School of Distance Education – and who is now (2014) Assistant Principal at Queanbeyan Public School – came across a reference to T A White's manuscript. She found that it was located in the Department's library at Parramatta. Eloise quickly notified her colleague on the staff of Dubbo School of Distance Education, Graeme Hosken, of her discovery, as she knew that Graeme was a military history 'buff'. Graeme contacted the librarian regarding borrowing the three volumes, which were mailed to Dubbo, allowing him to read the manuscript.

Immediately he recognised – as had Eloise before him – the very important historical significance of this unpublished work. He then contacted Rob Asser, whose role in the Department included identifying and taking care of Departmental items of historical significance.

With an eye to the desirability of publishing Tom White's work, Rob contacted the Mitchell Library to investigate the possibility of filming every page and then printing off the pages from film in hard bound 'book' format. The Library recommended he contact W. & F. Pascoe Pty. Ltd, which he did. The three part manuscript was successfully filmed by that company. Dr John Dugdale (see above), was approached to seek his support in publishing the three sets of the three part manuscript. Dr Dugdale readily agreed. And, as noted above, he wrote a fine Preface which we have retained in the digitised publication of T A White's manuscript; and the then Director-General of the Department, Dr Ken Boston, gave his enthusiastic support.

The 2014 digitised version and upload onto the internet

In 2013 my then Departmental colleague, Monica Ling, alerted me to the fact that in the section of the Bridge Street head office where she worked there were two sets of a work "that I think you will be very interested in, Paul". When she brought them to my office, I reacted with great excitement - just as Graeme Hosken and Rob Asser had done on discovering the work 19 years before. I had never heard of this work. Sometime later my colleague Bindi Blomstrand told me that she had located the original, fairly fragile, three part manuscript. She gave them to me to look after. I felt, and feel, very privileged.

I set about exploring possibilities to have the 1996 three volumes digitised. This was completed, thanks to the expertise of Andrew Finlay, then of Kwik Kopy. Monique Azzopardi, of Hicksons law firm – with the generous support of David Fischl, Hicksons Partner – made an invaluable contribution to the project through her researching legal documents, carefully constructed written texts for inclusion on the website on issues such as disclaimers, copyright and so on – as well as her joyful support throughout.

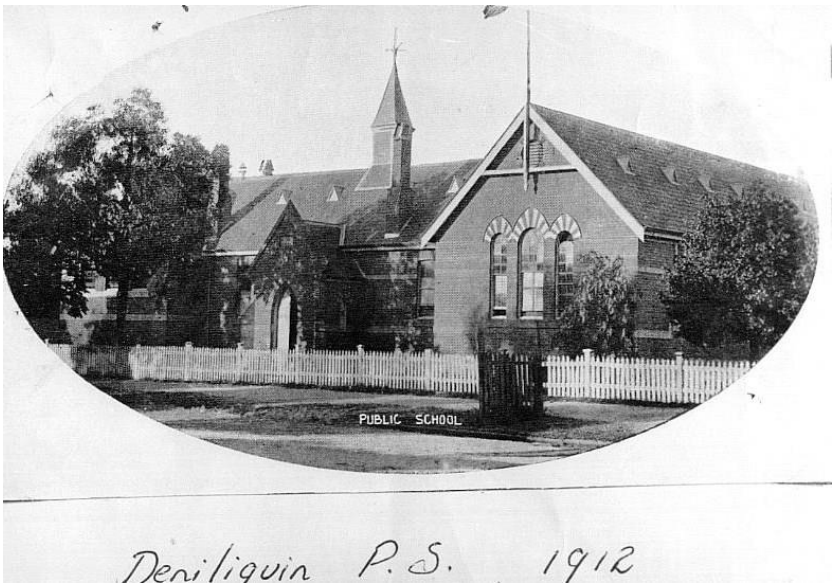
Our Secretary, Dr Michele Bruniges AM, enthusiastically supported this initiative and the subsequent decision to upload Tom White's three part manuscript on the internet. The project could not have been completed without the expertise and commitment of my Executive Assistant, Ms Georgie Lochhead and my Personal Assistant / Carer, Ms Xiaodi Liu. The Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, quickly and happily agreed to launch the publication on the internet, and to formally present to Dr Max White, on behalf of the White family, one full set of the 1996 hard bound copies which were digitised.

TA White's career as an educator before he enlists in February 1915

As noted earlier, virtually all of the following information has been provided by Dr Max White – both within his unpublished manuscript and in conversation.

> On leaving school at the end of 1901 Tom had started work at a clothing and tailoring shop in Deniliquin. The wages were 4 shillings forty cents (although the value of 4 shillings in 1901 would be worth much more than 40 cents in 2014) per 62 hour week. While working at the tailors shop he was tutored by the school headmaster in preparing for the State-wide Pupil Teachers exam in May 1902. On passing Tom was employed as a probationary pupil teacher at the Deniliquin Superior School – also known locally as the George Street School.

The following 2 photos are that of the Deniliquin Superior School in 1912, and the same building today, which is now The Peppin Heritage Centre. (The second photo was taken by Dr Max White, himself)



The wing on the right hand side of the building (as we see it in the photos) has been ‘done up’ to look like a classroom with desks, seating, etc as it would have been in the 1920s or so. The next two photos illustrate this.

In the next photo of the 1919 carpentry class, note the words frequently used as the name of the Deniliquin Superior School at that time - “George Street School”.

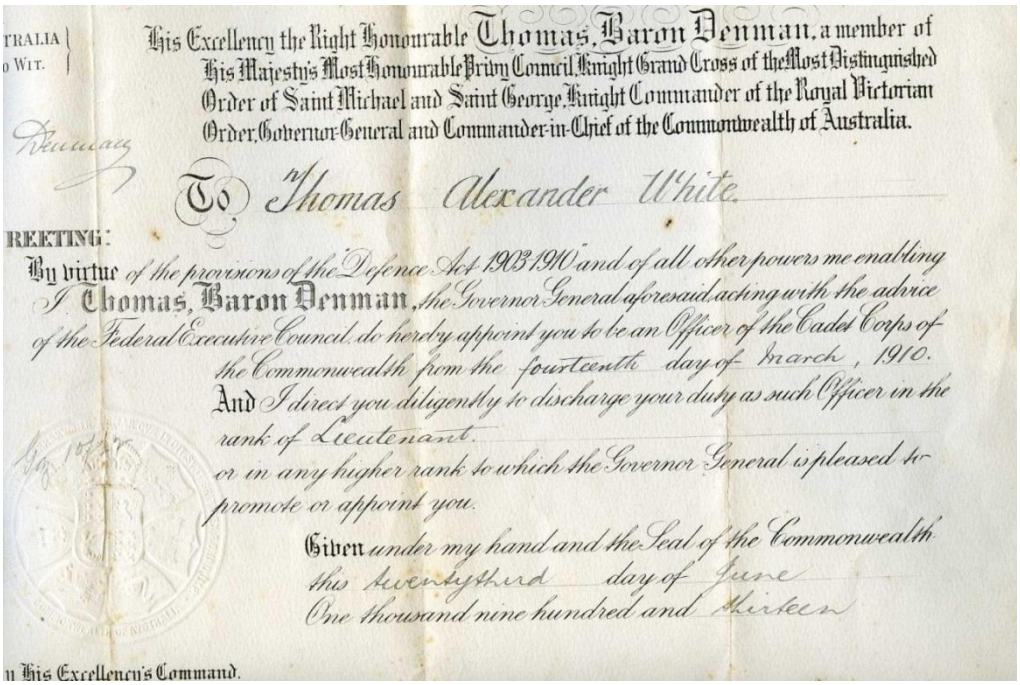
At the Teachers College in Sydney, Tom White undertook his education to prepare him to be a teacher. This photo was taken in 1905 when Tom was at Teachers College and was 19 years of age.

Even before the outbreak of World War I Tom White had shown a keen interest in military matters. During his time at Teachers College, Tom had been a member of The University of Sydney's Army Corps. The following photo – in which Tom is second from the left in the second back row – was taken in 1906.

Tom White's first teaching appointment as a fully-fledged teacher was at the William Street School on the eastern fringe of the Sydney CBD. The year of his appointment is unclear, but he was certainly there in 1909 as demonstrated in the following photograph of Tom and his William Street School cadets.

His keenness for school cadet training is demonstrated in the next photo of Tom at a school cadet camp in Katoomba in 1908 – when Tom was in his 22nd year.

Tom's commitment to and leadership of cadet units in schools was formally recognised and rewarded in 1910 when the Governor-General of Australia, Baron Denman, in his capacity as Lieutenant officer of the Cadet Corps of the Commonwealth of Australia, commissioned Tom White as a Lieutenant. Below is a photo of the official document of Commission, signed by the Governor General on March 14, 1910.



TRALIA
o WIT.

His Excellency the Right Honourable Thomas, Baron Denman, a member of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth of Australia.

To Thomas Alexander White.

REETING:

By virtue of the provisions of the Defence Act 1903-1910 and of all other powers me enabling I Thomas, Baron Denman, the Governor-General aforesaid, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, do hereby appoint you to be an Officer of the Cadet Corps of the Commonwealth from the fourteenth day of March, 1910.

And I direct you diligently to discharge your duty as such Officer in the rank of Lieutenant.

or in any higher rank to which the Governor-General is pleased to promote or appoint you.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth this twenty-third day of June One thousand nine hundred and thirteen

n His Excellency's Command.

In January 1910 Tom was appointed as a teacher at the Cobar Evening School. The school may have been associated with the Cobar School of Mines since evening education had become a priority as the local mines and the town grew.

A new school appointment at North Sydney was offered to him in January 1912, which he accepted.

In late 1913 he was given a four month appointment to Waratah, a suburb of Newcastle. Towards the end of 1913 Tom received his appointment to Hillston.

Tom, Jess White and their two young children set out at the height of summer in 1914 for Tom to take up his position as the Principal of the two teacher school at Hillston – which was a frontier town of about 1000 souls on the Lachlan Riverina in the western Riverina. Earlier in this Introduction it was pointed out that Tom's attempt to join the AIF in 1914 did not succeed. The following email from his grandson Dr Max White to me on 18 May, 2014, probably indicates why his offer was turned down.

> On T A White I picked up some new information on a recent visit to Hillston. Tom was Headmaster of the 2 teacher school there from 1913 to the end of 1915. It was a pretty terrible place back then; no electricity, no water and sewerage, the nearest rail head was Griffith or was it still Wagga (requiring either a 100 or 200 km Cobb and Co coach journey) and the School Residence pretty awful (it was condemned in about 1920) and on the last street in town and about 3-4 km from the shops. That sets the scene for the new information from the Hillston Library. In 1914 shortly after the outbreak of war Tom White wrote to the District Inspector at Wagga requesting permission to enlist. The Inspector's reply was brief and terse; no! and accused Tom of enlisting simply to escape from his appointment at Hillston!!

As reported in Dr Max White's unpublished biography of his grandfather, on February 7, 1916 Tom enlisted in the AIF and was accepted for the intensive Officer Training Course at the Duntroon Military Academy.

The First World War

After his initial training he served on the Western Front in a number of famous Australian World War I battle zones.

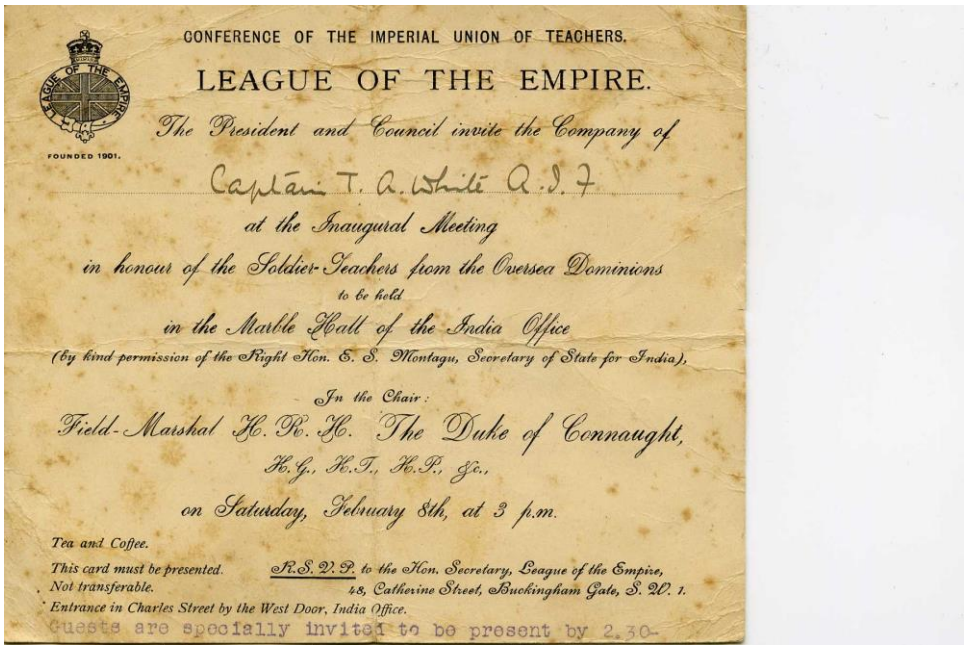
Originally commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant, Tom was soon promoted to a 1st Lieutenant, and soon again promoted to Captain on May 10, 1918, and photographed around the time of his new appointment.

The next section detailing Tom's military service has been extracted from Dr Max White's unpublished biography of his grandfather. I sought and received Dr White's explicit permission to do this – to which he readily and happily agreed.

> On June 9, 1916 Tom's commission as a 2nd Lieutenant was gazetted. He was then assigned to the 13th Battalion. In October the 13th Bn Reinforcements boarded His Majesty's Australian Troopship "Ceramic". On board also was Tom's younger brother Reg later assigned to the 19th Bn. Sailing via Durban, Capetown and the Cape Verde Islands the Ceramic docked at Plymouth on November 21, 1916.
>
> Tom joined his battalion on the 10th of December 1916 on the Western Front at Ribemont; a picturesque farming village just to the north of Amiens. It was bitterly cold; that winter was the most severe in over 50 years. Tom was given responsibility for B Company and promoted to 1st Lieutenant ….. .
>
> The Battalion had Christmas out of the front line with Tom's company celebrating Christmas Day in the tiny school room at the nearby village of Coisy … .
>
> In February 1917 Tom experienced his first frontline action at Mametz. In mid March Tom was seconded to the 4th Infantry Training Bn at the AIF Headquarters, Codford in Wiltshire. …
> Tom returned to his battalion at Ypres in August 1917 and by September he was back in the front line at Westhoek, Zonnebeke, Polygon Wood and Paschendale in the Ypres salient in southern Belgium. In the October battle for Passchendale, Tom, along with about one quarter of his battalion became seriously affected by mustard gas. The debilitating effects of the gas were to remain with him for the rest of his life.
>
> Tom again saw frontline action on the Somme in December 1917, at Ypres in January-February 1918 and then on the Somme in March 1918. In April 1918 Tom's Battalion was ordered to the outskirts of Villers Bretonneux to join all of the other 60 Australian Battalions under the command of Lt General John Monash …. . Tom was promoted Captain on May 10. On the 20th of May 1918 Tom was wounded by machine gun fire from a German plane disguised with British markings. After a spell in an Army hospital near Amiens he was transferred to the London General Hospital in Wandsworth. Tom remained in hospital for a little over two months.

In 1918 Tom attended a special event in London in honour of teachers who were soldiers, sponsored by the League of the Empire Conference of the Imperial Union of Teachers.

Below is Tom's official invitation to this prestigious occasion.



CONFERENCE OF THE IMPERIAL UNION OF TEACHERS.

LEAGUE OF THE EMPIRE.

The President and Council invite the Company of

Captain T. A. White A.I.F.

at the Inaugural Meeting

in honour of the Soldier-Teachers from the Oversea Dominions

to be held

in the Marble Hall of the India Office

(By kind permission of the Right Hon. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India),

In the Chair:

Field-Marshal H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught,

K.G., K.T., K.P., &c.,

on Saturday, February 8th, at 3 p.m.

FOUNDED 1901.

Tea and Coffee.

This card must be presented. R.S.V.P. to the Hon. Secretary, League of the Empire,
Not transferable. 48, Catherine Street, Buckingham Gate, S.W. 1.
Entrance in Charles Street by the West Door, India Office.

Guests are specially invited to be present by 2.30-

On October 3, 1918 Tom returned to duty in France. By then the German Army was being pushed back rapidly by the Australians under General Monash. The 13th Battalion was stationed in reserve at the village of Picquigny just to the west of Amiens on the River Somme. On October 19 Tom was mentioned in despatches for gallantry for attempting to save a soldier in a canal.

In his unpublished biography of T A White, Dr Max White wrote poignantly about his grandfather's physical impairment 'legacy' from the War.

> Tom's war started when he entered Duntroon Military Academy in February 1916. While his wartime experience had a start date it never really had an ending. This was due to him being severely affected by mustard gas in October 1917. The incident is not recorded in his service file but I remember my father telling me it was the result of washing his face and hands in a bomb crater not knowing the water surface contained a heavy layer of gas. The effects on his hands, head and throat were with him for the rest of his life.
> The formal ending of his service occurred in stages. For his return to Australia it was on the Hospital Ship Karoola; embarking at Southhampton on May 10, 1919 and reaching Sydney on June 28. His reunion with his family was short lived. Tom required further hospitalisation at Randwick (now the Prince of Wales Hospital) for the gunshot wounds to his leg and his dermatitis.

Tom White's post-war experience as Principal of Public Schools

After this period of convalescence and rehabilitation, Tom resumed his public school teaching career which – as noted earlier - he had commenced as a probationary pupil teacher at the Deniliquin Superior School in 1902. As also noted earlier, at the time of his enlistment he was Principal of a two teacher school at Hillston.

On August 23, 1919 the Department of Education appointed him to be an Assistant Inspector of Schools at Paddington. He returned to teaching in January 1920 when he was appointed Principal of Gresford Public School which was a two-teacher "Class 9" School which went from Kindergarten through to Third Year (also often referred to as the Intermediate Year) of secondary schooling. In August 1922 he was appointed Principal of Tingha Public School. This was a promotion for Tom White because this was a 6 teacher school.

Indicative of the esteem and affection of the Tingha community to Mr and Mrs White is the following extract from Dr Max White's unpublished biography of his grandfather.

> Tom and Jess became highly respected members of the small community. They were active in the local tennis club, the local Anglican Church and the RSL. On news of Tom's promotion to Tingha telegrams were sent to the Education Department requesting they be able to stay on. When the bureaucrats said no the town organised a series of farewells. The Tennis Club, the P&C Association, the RSL and the Church Women's Guild all held afternoon teas and suppers and made presentations of inscribed gifts to Tom and Jess.

In 1925 he was appointed Principal of the Peakhurst School. Here is a photograph of Tom White in 1926, in his 40th year, during his time as Principal of Peakhurst School.

In May 1925, the family moved back to Sydney, where Tom had been appointed Principal of the Peakhurst Public School, on the corner of Forest & Bonds Road, Peakhurst. That particular building had been built in 1871. In 1928, when Tom was no longer Principal there, the school was moved to its present location in Bonds Road.

In 1927 he was appointed Principal of Bellevue Hill School. Here he is photographed with the Bellevue Hill School cricket team in that year.

Tom White is promoted to the NSW Public Schools Inspectorate

In 1928 Tom White was promoted to the role of Inspector of schools: first of all in the Hay District of the Riverina. In 1931 he was appointed Inspector for the Wagga Wagga District. In 1932 he became the Inspector for Cooma and the Far South Coast of NSW.

While based in Cooma his School Reader for 9-10 year old students, *"Yappy Dingo"*, was published by Whitcomb & Tombs.

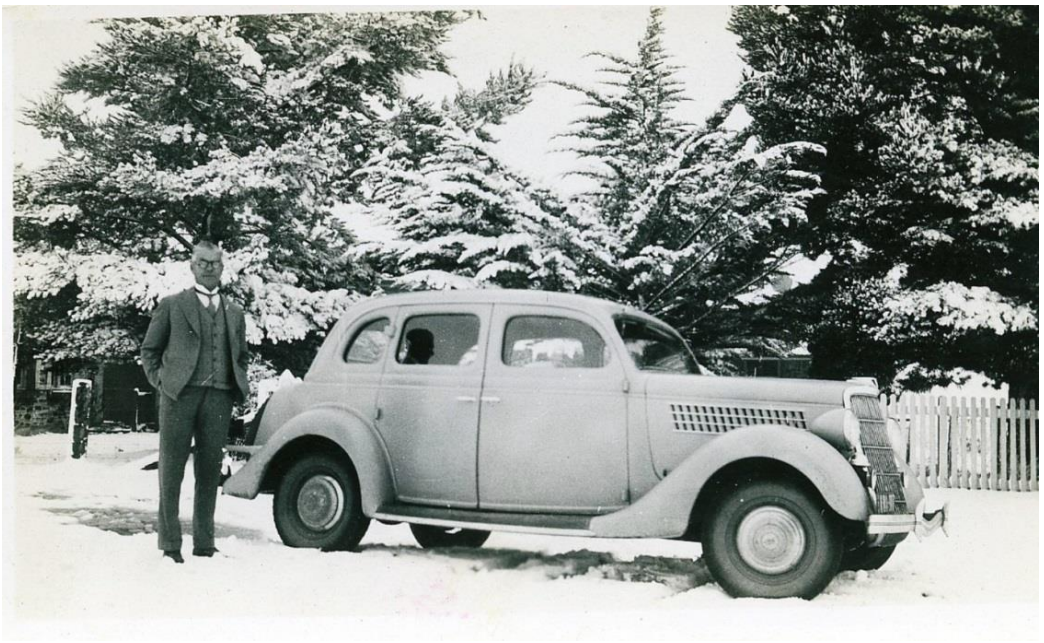
In the possession of Ken Stevenson, Vice President of the NSW Teachers' RSL Sub-Branch there is a silver tobacco tin passed on by Dr John Dugdale, on which is engraved in capital letters

NSW RETURNED SOLDIERS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
BEST RACONTEUR

It was awarded to whoever the Association judged to have given the best 'yarn' to the Association during the year. The list of engraved names commenced at 1930. Engraved as the best raconteur in 1932 is the name T A White.

The name engraved as the best raconteur in 1951 is also T A White!

The next photo was taken of Tom at Cooma in 1933 in his second year as Inspector of Schools in Cooma and the Far South Coast of NSW.



In 1935 Tom White received the award of the King's Silver Jubilee Medal for his services to the State.

This 1936 photo – the year that Tom turned 50 - was taken at Nimmitabel during Tom's period as Inspector of Schools for Cooma and the Far South Coast of NSW.

In 1937 Tom White was transferred back to Sydney where he became Inspector of schools in Rozelle. The next photo is of Tom and Jess White en route to a farewell to him as Inspector for the Rozelle Inspectorate in 1942.

After finishing his time at Rozelle, he proceeded to become Inspector of schools first of all in Parramatta and then Hurstville inspectorates.

In 1948 Tom White served as President of the Australasian Institute of School Inspectors. The next photo of both Tom and Jess was taken of some - or all - of the NSW contingent on board ship en route to the Institute's Conference in Perth in that year. Tom was in his 62nd year. Tom is standing in the back row second on the left, wearing glasses. Jess White is seated, second row, first on the left. Only the men were Inspectors. The women were their wives / partners (although the latter term was not usually used in such contexts in Australia in 1948!).

Tom's post retirement years

Tom White retired on December 31, 1950 aged 64. He was farewelled, along with Jess, by a gathering of over 200 teachers at Hurstville Boys High School on November 29.

As Dr Max White's biography of his grandfather points out, in the final years of his life Tom's health had not been good.

> The effects of his exposure to mustard gas in 1917 continued to cause problems. He was granted TPI (Totally and Permanently Incapacitated) status that year. In the early 1950s he was admitted to Uralla Hospital Repatriation Hospital at Concord on a number of occasions. In 1955 he took up painting with watercolours. The paintings were generally of rural scenes ……

Sometimes Tom would donate his paintings to schools to which he had been asked to deliver an Anzac or Empire Day address. Dr Max White records that Tom donated three of his watercolours to South Wagga Primary School when he visited the school in 1958.

As has been described earlier, much of Tom's expertise, research, commitment and writing between 1951 and 1958 were devoted to producing *New South Wales Department of Education Record of Service in Two World Wars* and, subsequently during the following four years in seeking to have his manuscript (of which at that time there were only the original plus five copies he had made himself) professionally published and made available for distribution to public school students, teachers and Principals as well as Departmental officers for the following generations. It was his burning desire to have this happen before his death.

However, Tom died on October 27, 1962, one week short of his 76th birthday.

This final photo, taken only 6 months before his death, has the caption "Captain Tom White 13th Bn, AIF Last Anzac Day March, Wagga, 1962 With son William Thomas White, 2/13 Bn, AIF".

Joy that his passion to have his work made widely available is finally fulfilled

I am sure that all of us who have been involved in this project, or who have become aware of Tom White and his manuscript, are delighted that on August 11, 2014 – 56 years after he completed his three Part manuscript, and 52 years after his death – Tom Alexander White's desire was finally fulfilled with his remarkable work now being available to all via the internet.

Dr Paul Brock AM
Director, Learning and Development Research
Office of the Secretary
11 August, 2014